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JAPANESE SADDLE OF A FEUDAL LORD
Complete in every part including bridle and lead line
Gift of George Trumbull Ladd

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RECENT GIFT OF GEORGE TRUMBULL LADD

The Oriental Department has lately added to its Japanese collection a saddle and bridle of Tokugawa times (1700-1850 A. D.), an archery set, a suit of armor, an incense game and a metal arrow point. Professor George Trumbull Ladd, who has given these objects to the Museum, made three trips to Japan during the late nineties, as advisor to the Japanese nation. Many beautiful gifts were forced upon him by grateful individuals of high rank. Each item has an interesting history connected with its presentation, and is also of interest in itself.

In a letter accompanying the gifts, he writes: "All of the above curios were selected by Japanese experts of the highest authority and given to me in recognition of services to the nation. It is not a random and miscellaneous collection made on my own judgment, or by a hired commissioner, but choice pieces each one representing some special department of art in which the Japanese excel, and all executed and selected by the leading art critics and artists of Japan. These objects are the gifts of a grateful nation. My bank account would never have sufficed to pay for them. But, then, I have never received a dollar in money for what I have done for Japan. However, it is impossible to get ahead of the Japanese,—Emperor, nobles or people,—in an affair calling for gratitude. For this virtue is a matter of honor and affection with them."

The Japanese saddle is the kind that was used in ceremonial processions by daimyos, or feudal lords, in the days of Old Japan. The lacquer work on the sides, back and front of the seat, is typical of the late Tokugawa period, when true art was at low ebb. Craftsmanship in the manipulation of lacquer, however, was technically excellent at this time and highly decorative. The pad for the seat is chamois leather, decorated with stamped patterns in two colors, red and black. The large heavy iron stirrups are inlaid with silver, and seem like huge Chinese shoes with turned-up toes. They are made large, Professor Ladd tells us, so that the fighting knight could stand up in them and fight with his sword. The saddle and bridle are complete in

every detail. They were presented to Professor Ladd by the Imperial Educational Society for services in 1899.

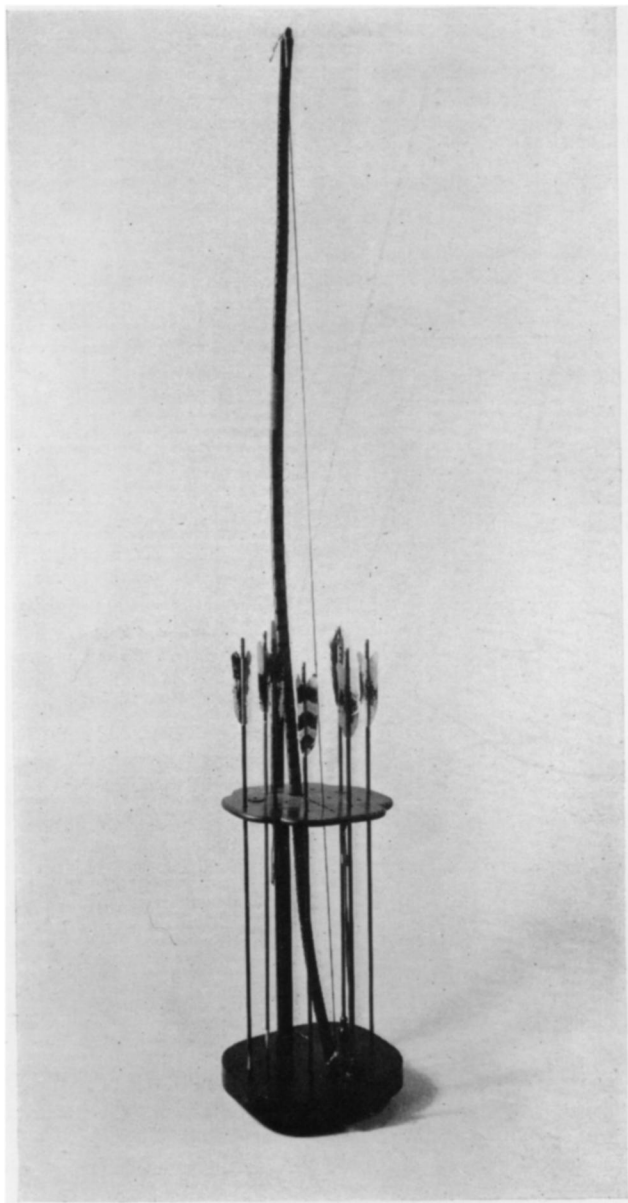
The archery set, which is also complete, was ordered by the daimyo, Lord Date of Sendai, for his most skillful archer, and was procured and presented to Professor Ladd in recognition of a course of lectures given to the teachers of Sendai and vicinity in the summer of 1907. It consists of a long bow, seven feet two inches in length, thirteen arrows (three of which are old, the others of much later fabrication), a pair of gauntlets, a brocade bag, and a riding whip. A special stand holds them all.

The suit of armor, also given by the Imperial Educational Society for services, is of the type that was commonly in use during Japanese feudal times, when a knight's armor was protection against arrows shot from a distance, and against the downward sweep of a heavy sword in hand-to-hand combat. The helmet, therefore, is iron, very heavy and thoroughly effective as defensive armor when combating with swords, but the other parts of the suit, with the exception of the breast-plate which is iron, are made of lacquered strips of wood laced together in a fanciful way with wide cotton or silk tapes. Such a suit of armor is wonderfully decorative and artistic, and somewhat effective for the Japanese mode of warfare, but far from suitable for modern times.

The incense game made up of two incense burners of blue and white porcelain, packages of incense, mother-of-pearl and lacquered counters, and a complete writing set, is contained in a charming lacquer case with snugly fitting drawers and silver hinged doors. It is decorated with gold lacquer, mother-of-pearl and silver inlay. When the Japanese court was at Old Kyoto this was a very popular aristocratic game. It was a contest in which the players were obliged to compare and guess by the odor various kinds of incense. After the player determined the kind, he was obliged to make a literary allusion which tested his knowledge of ancient literature. The equipment was elaborate and beautiful, and oftentimes the pride and joy of the dilettantes. The Nobles Club presented this game to Professor Ladd in 1899.

We are pleased to have these interesting objects from one who presents them as a testimony of the unique confidential relation and affection which existed between an oriental nation and a native of the Western Reserve.

J. A. M.



BOW AND ARROWS OF ANCIENT JAPAN

Gift of George Trumbull Ladd